



Enjoyable reading for the Employees  
of Barrington

September-  
October 2005

# The **E** Word

Village of Barrington

## Barrington Firefighters Aid Recovery Process in New Orleans

On Saturday, September 17, Lt. Greg Keegan and Fire-fighter/Paramedic Al Simonds were deployed to Gulfport, Mississippi, to help with Hurricane Katrina recovery. They left from Mundelein FD Station #1 at 3:00 a.m. Sunday.

Although they were initially to be sent to Gulfport, Mississippi, they were diverted to New Orleans. They arrived in New Orleans around 6:00 p.m. Sunday, September 18.

Chief Jim Arie and Deputy Chief John Feit kept in contact with Lt. Keegan and FF Simonds via cell phone. They worked 24-hour shifts at a New Orleans fire station, followed by 24 hours "off-duty". When not at the fire station, they lived in tents in New Orleans.

There were 12 firefighters working each 24-hour shift at the fire station they were assigned. However, the fire station was set up for four personnel, so eight of the twelve had to sleep on mats and sleeping bags each night.

Eighty percent of the New Orleans firefighters and police officers lost their homes and all their personal belongings. On



Lt. Greg Keegan and FF/P Al Simonds, as members of Illinois Task Force 3, stand outside their tent in New Orleans.

their off-duty days, both Greg Keegan and Al Simonds donated time as carpenters to help re-hab the homes of firefighters and police officers.

While they were in New Orleans not only was the weather in the 90s with heat indexes over 110, but they also had to prepare for yet another hurricane, Hurricane Rita.

They returned to Barrington via railroad on October 2.

Lt. Keegan and FF Simonds both expressed sincere appreciation for the opportunity to represent Barrington and Illinois. When Chief Arie asked if

they would go again if they had it to do over, both immediately said yes.

Lt. Greg Keegan sent this e-mail to all fire personnel:

"Just a note to say **"Thank You"** to the department and all of its members. I just want to express my gratitude to all of you for stepping up and helping out by working extra and covering for myself and Al Simonds, while we had the honor of going to New Orleans and being able to help first hand. If it were not for you helping out at home, none of us would have been able to

*continued on page 3*

### Service Anniversaries

#### September, October

Martin Byrne, PD, 10/7/94  
John Edwards, PD, 10/6/75  
Joe Egler, PW, 10/10/94  
Jim Feit, FD, 10/23/75  
Nancy Fidler, FD, 9/6/83  
Fred Galster, PW, 9/10/84  
Betty Henriksson, PD,  
10/13/03  
John Heinz, PW, 10/30/89  
Jack Humer, PD, 9/29/75  
Doug Kluth, PD, 9/10/04  
Ralph Kuhlman, PW,  
9/14/81  
Jeff Lawler, PD, 10/30/75  
Melanie Marcordes, VMO,  
9/2/97  
Denise Pieroni, VM,  
10/24/91  
Jeff Risner, PD, 9/5/03  
Michelle Stevens, PD,  
9/5/03  
Chad Streff, PD, 9/10/04  
Dan Truax, PW, 9/18/79  
Peggy Ventrone, PD,  
10/12/04  
Linda Verdung, PW,  
10/24/84  
Scott Weisbruch, PW,  
9/27/99  
Keith Wrzala, PD, 10/7/94  
Ben Zalewski, PD, 10/13/04

#### Welcoming a Daughter

Kim & Mike Hanson, FD,  
daughter Madeline Joy,  
on September 22

Save this date: ANNUAL EMPLOYEE HEALTH FAIR, Thursday, November 10, 8-11 a.m.,  
Public Safety Building. Flu shots will be available.

# Herbals for Health?



Using herbs and plants for medicinal purposes has a long tradition. Once thought of as "traditional" medicine, herbal medicine has emerged as a popular alternative or supplement to modern medicine. According to the World Health Organization, 4 billion people, almost 70% of the world population, use herbal medicine for some aspect of primary health care.

Many herbs have health benefits. For instance, research has shown that Echinacea cuts the length of cold and that powdered ginger is effective against motion sickness and nausea. However,

well-controlled studies on herbal supplements is lacking. At this point, our understanding is largely anecdotal.

To address this uncertainty, federal law states that herbs cannot claim to prevent, diagnose, treat or cure a condition or disease.

Because herbs are natural, many people believe they are safe. While many are safe, some have hazardous side effects. Also, herbs may interact with prescription medications, over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, vitamins and minerals. For example, ginkgo taken with aspirin may lead to spontaneous and/or excessive bleeding. Therefore, medical professionals suggest taking herbs only for short periods.



Herbs—unlike drugs—are not standardized. When you buy a drug, even an OTC one, you know that each capsule contains the same amount of active ingredient. Drug companies must follow strict quality-control measures. Herb companies do not. Doses differ between herb capsules and from product to product. Also, ac-

tive ingredients vary depending on the plant part (flower, root, seeds, nuts, bark, branch), plant form (dried, extract, tincture, tea) and species.

Although the herb industry is growing, consumers should become informed to protect themselves. Here are some tips:

- Determine whether you *really* need an herbal supplement.
- Research the herb to determine validity of claims, safety, most effective form, side effects, and reasonable price.
- Inform your doctor and pharmacist about any herbs you are considering.
- Read the product label and follow the instructions.
- Pick brands that have been tested for consistency in dosage by looking for the USP or NF symbols.
- Use herbal products only for minor conditions and for short periods.

*Excerpted from a Colorado State University Cooperative Extension publication.*

## Wins State Golf Title

Congratulations to Lt. **Char McLear** on her Women's State Senior Amateur Golf Championship title. Char competed at a very windy Piper Glen Golf Course in Springfield, September 20-22. She ended with a three-round total of 19-over-par 235, which was 5 shots better than the runner up. This is Char's first state title.

## Firefighter Runs for Children's Memorial

**From firefighter/paramedic Joe Mullen and his wife Kelly comes this letter -**

Over a year has passed since (their son) Benjamin's brain surgery at Children's Memorial Hospital. The surgery went well and recovery has been successful as most of you know. However, Benjamin is still an epileptic and has difficulty with tremors in his hands. He has a really hard time holding things and doing daily activities because of the tremors. We're switching medications in hopes that some of his tremors will subside.

Benjamin is now six years old and just

loves life. He is full of energy and is such a joy for us to have. We want to thank all of you again for your support last May during that very scary time for our family. We couldn't have made it through his surgery and recovery without it.

Once again, the fundraising time of year is upon us for the Chicago Marathon, and again Joe is part of the

**Kids First Marathon**

team. Last year we raised \$5,000 for the hospital thanks to your donations. You have no idea how much that meant to us



and the hospital....Our goal is to surpass last year's total, raising \$10,000.

Donations will be accepted through October, and should be sent to Joe Mullen at the Fire Department. Please make your check payable to Children's Memorial Hospital. Write "Kids First Marathon Team" in the memo area.

**UPDATE:** Joe finished the October 9th marathon in 4 hours and 23 minutes. He came in 16,300 out of 42,000 runners. Both his time and placement in the race were his personal bests!

# Qualifying Events Allow Changes

Qualified status changes are events that **allow you to change your Section 125 flex plan** elections outside the open enrollment period. When you experience an applicable qualifying event, as defined by the Internal Revenue Service (examples are provided below), it is your responsibility to notify Human Resources and make your necessary changes within 31 days of the qualifying event.

This includes changes to your health plan, dental plan, vision plan (if applicable), health and/or dependent care reimbursement account, and supplemental life insurance (if applicable). Qualifying events include these examples.

## MARITAL STATUS CHANGE:

- ? Marriage
- ? Death of spouse
- ? Divorce or annulment
- ? Legal separation

## NUMBER OF DEPENDENTS CHANGE:

- ? Birth
- ? Adoption or placement for adoption
- ? Death of dependent child
- ? Dependent no longer satisfies rule for eligibility as a dependent because of:
  - attainment of age
  - loss of student status
  - marriage of dependent child

## GAIN/LOSS/CHANGE OF COVERAGE:

- ? If the employee gains or loses other coverage (i.e., spouse's health plan, or Medicare or Medicaid)
- ? Significant change in employee's spouse employer-provided insurance coverage

## EMPLOYMENT STATUS:

- ? Change in employment status of the employee or employee's spouse
- ? An unpaid leave of absence by the

- employee or employee's spouse
- ? Change from part-time to full-time status, or vice versa

Also note that according to the IRS federal code (Section 125, pretax option), benefit changes must be consistent with your qualifying event.

For example, if you adopted a child you may want to increase your HCFA and/or DCFA to cover the added medical expenses and/or daycare costs you might incur for your new child. On the other hand, you would not be allowed to increase your annual election if you lost a dependent.

**Notify Human Resources within 31 days of a qualifying event to change your 125 flex plan outside the open enrollment period.**

## BEST WISHES

Everyone sends their best wishes for a speedy recovery to Doug Murphy, PW. Get well soon, Doug!

## Dental Insurance (Non-FOP) Changes Due Soon

Keep your eyes open for information coming this month on revised and improved dental insurance, which also includes a vision discount plan through Vision Service Plan (VSP) and will be effective December 1, 2005.

This is considered a qualifying event and changes will be allowed to add, terminate or change your dental coverage in addition to increasing or decreasing your health care reimbursement account election.

## Two Barrington Firefighters Work in New Orleans Recovery

*continued from page 1*

go and help out in New Orleans.

The people and firefighters of New Orleans were very grateful for all of our help and could not tell us that enough times. Just being there to cover their stations so they had time to start to rebuild their lives was more than they could ask for.

"The small and limited help that we were

able to provide was a great relief to many of the people that lost everything that they had. This was a great opportunity for me and I will always be thankful for the privilege to serve the Department in this way. Once again I just wanted to say 'Thank You All!'"

Firefighter/Paramedic Al Simonds sent Chief Arie this handwritten note:

"Chief Arie, Thanks again for the opportunity to go to New Orleans and help our brothers down there. It was an experience I shall never forget."



Lt. Keegan (center) with his shift at his assigned station in New Orleans. Military guards accompanied them at all times.